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August 2015

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Swift Lifestyle 4

Tested by Mike Le Caplain Price £16,295 Berths 4 MIRO 1105kg Payload 145kg MTPLM 1250kg

IN A NUTSHELL It looks as though our new Swift is going to be popular



IF YOU WERE one of the 800 or so people who joined us at our Reader Rally at Stowford Farm Meadows in May, you might have seen our newest long-termers' inaugural camping outing. And it's a little cracker.

However, it's not technically a Swift. Peel away the additional equipment and special stickers and you'll actually find a Sprite Alpine 4 hiding beneath. Dealer-network giant Marquis simply takes a standard Sprite then ramps up the equipment levels, to the extent that the resulting model no longer looks or feels like a budget van. In other words, you get all the benefits of a Sprite (light weight, youthful feel inside and out, and that superb single front window) with much of the luxury of a welterweight Swift.

The Reader Rally may have been the van's inaugural outing, but it was far from its maiden voyage. In fact it didn't even make it to our offices in Middlesex before getting diverted to the Motor Industry Research Association's proving ground in Warwickshire, where it provided endless cups of tea and coffee to the driving and ballasting troops on duty during our annual week of Tow Car Awards judging.

And even when it did finally land at *Practical Caravan* HQ, it didn't hang around for long. I towed it the 200 or so miles to



ABOVE The Lifestyle 4 proved an ideal tea van at our recent Tow Car Awards judging RIGHT It made a great base at our Reader Rally, too

Stowford Farm using our (also new) Suzuki S-Cross long-termers. While the sidewind that seemed to accompany me most of the way there created a certain 'busyness' when we were being passed by big lorries, the Swift behaved impeccably on the way back.

And for two adults, it's a beauty. On this occasion, though, my wife and son had to bail out of the rally at the last minute, so I had the Lifestyle all to myself. And I felt as though I was in the lap of luxury. The 4ft 2in settees weren't a problem in practice, and the view out over the Devon countryside

through that huge front window was stunning.

I had no complaints about the good-sized kitchen, either, and being able to fall into the French bed at the end of another busy day without having to do battle with slats and cushions was bliss.

I'm a sucker for a caravan stereo into which I can plug my iPod, and there seem to be power sockets just about everywhere you looked in the Swift, so my camera, laptop and phone never wanted for juice. The wardrobe is mighty big for such a small caravan, too, and the programmable Thetford heating/

boiler is easy to use and kept everything toasty warm, even when the weather became stormy.

In fact, my only real grumble concerning the Lifestyle 4 is about the washroom. I love the way that Swift has shifted the washbasin and vanity area outside into the bedroom space, and the resulting corner shower/toilet room is a pretty good size. But I hate clingy, pull-round shower curtains as much now as I did 20 years ago!

